

Interview with May Dunphy  
in Orleans, Massachusetts

Interview #1  
by Vivian and Ralph  
Andrist  
May 30, 1984

Q: This is an interview with May Dunphy and it is taking place in the living room of her apartment at Rock Harbor Village, Orleans. The date is Wednesday, May 30, 1984. The interviewers are Ralph and Vivian Andrist.

May, let's start by asking you when and where you were born?

Mrs. Dunphy: I was born in England in County Durham in 1912. Then my parents when I was ten years old moved back to Shropshire which was their home. This is where they were originally from.

Q: Tell me a little about your family? Who were your mother and father, and their names?

Mrs. Dunphy: Well, my father was John Salmon, and originally their family they had been there for a few generations. in this Saint Martens, a little village in Shropshire, they had originally come from Coventry. My mother, her name was Alice Ellene Jones and she was from the borders of Wales, which---Shropshire is on the borders

of Wales. So, of course, Jones is a very popular name down there, you know. She was left an orphan when she was eight. And she went from one relative to another. And then when she was ten years old she went into domestic service. In a big, big estate. There were very big estates then, you know. You started at the bottom and worked yourself up. And in the end she was a cheese-maker. It was a large farm, you know a gentlemen farmer's place where she worked. So, that's what, she did. Now my father, he was a miner and he was the eldest of six children.

Q: Mining in the Welsh coal mines?

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, yes--well, we were over the border, we weren't in Wales. We were still in England. He, I think he was fourteen when he went down the mines. He had to support the family. So that's why he had to leave school and do that.

Q: Did his father die?

Mrs. Dunphy: No he was a drunk! Today we call him an alcoholic, he was a drunkard. And my mother's mother was a drunkard. So, we were always bitter about drink, you know, and that's why when my brother and I were born they swore that we would both have higher education to make

up for what they didn't have. But they were smart, they were smart alright. You, know, although they didn't have higher education, they knew how many beans make five (Laughter). Especially my mother.

They worked hard. They worked very hard, and in the end they had a small farm, they were able to have a small farm of their own. This is what they enjoyed, the country life, you know. She made butter and all kinds of things, took care of the animals, it was a nice life in the country.

Q: How did you happen to be named,---you're May---?

Mrs. Dunphy: I'm Alice May. My first name after my mother and May because they did not like abbreviated names.

Q: And what was your maiden name?

Mrs. Dunphy: Salmon

Q: S-A-L-M-O-N

Mrs. Dunphy: Like the fish.

Q: Like the fish -- right. You were not named after anyone in particular?

Mrs. Dunphy: Well, only my mother's one name. But she was Alice Ellene. She was always called Ellene, with an

"e" and that was the only person I was named after.

I had a brother, he was John, which he got Jack. He went to the Naval Academy. Unfortunately, he died when he was 57. He had married, and after the war he went back to college and became a teacher. Then gradually he got to be a headmaster in Oxford. He went back to Oxford to do some teaching there at night school.

Q: What about your education?

Mrs. Dunphy: I went to -- I got a scholarship for high school, which in those days over there you had to pay, but I was lucky and got a scholarship. Through the perseverance of my parents, they just made you stick with the work. Then I went to nursing school in London and I did four years general to graduate and then I did six, stayed on for six months on the staff. Then I went to Liverpool to do Fevers Nursing, as we call them over there, which is contagious diseases, and that was another year which you got another diploma for. Then I did a year of Tuberculosis which you got another diploma for, and then I did six months of mid-wifery to be a certified mid-wife.

Q: What was your motivation? Had you always been interested in nursing or science?

Mrs. Dunphy: I had, I had. But my parents thought that I should -- they sent me first of all to a commercial college

They thought it was the thing to do to be a secretary. But I was never happy, and I never wanted it. I was only there about a year (chuckle). At last, I persuaded them I wanted to go to nursing school.

I guess I saw it through my mother, she was always on call for anyone that was sick. Night and day, you know. She wasn't trained for anything like that, but she just had the feeling. She was a "good doer", but not overbearing. A helping hand. She used to stay with people when they were sick, because nobody had private nurses in those days, you know.

Q: How did you happen to come to America?

Mrs. Dunphy: Well, Norman lost his father when he was thirteen and they lived in Liverpool and then his mother brought he and his sister over here to America. They knew somebody here who sponsored them. And they came to Great Neck. He was still a British citizen, so when war started he had to go back to England and he was on the police force. At a hospital dance a friend of mine---her brother was also on the police force---and he invited Norman for a blind date with me. And that's where I met him (LAUGHTER)

Q: Did you work during the war, then, in England?

Mrs. Dunphy: I worked, yes, I worked during the war and

then we were married in 1940. I just worked that first year and a little bit afterwards. But, then Norman's mother, she unfortunately had a mastectomy, and it was not good. And the doctor, he only gave her nine months to live and that's how long she lived. So, Norman wanted me to look for a housekeeper for him, and I said, "Look, we're engaged, it's silly to wait til June, we're both twenty-eight," I said, " I'll stop working and we'll get married, and I'll come and take care of your mother."

Q: His mother was back in Great Neck?

Mrs. Dunphy: No, she came over.

Q: Oh, she came back to England?

Mrs. Dunphy: She tried to get back to America, she'd left her daughter here. But she couldn't get a ship, she couldn't get a plane. They were only taking twelve civilians at a time and mostly those were men. So she could not get back to be with her daughter.

Q: So, then, how did it happen that you and Norman came to America?

Mrs. Dunphy: Well, Norman's sister came over to visit us in '48, after the war. He said he would like to come back and bring the children over here, show them the life

that we had in America, as we'd been through all those war years, it was really rough. So, Jeanette said she and her husband would sponsor us. So it took four years.

Q: Where in England were you living at the time?

Mrs. Dunphy: We were living on the outskirts of Liverpool. A town called Oswestry.

Q: What did Norman do?

Mrs. Dunphy: He was on the police force.

Q: Oh, he was on the police force?

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes.

Q: What was the date of your marriage?

Mrs. Dunphy: 1940.

Q: In what month?

Mrs. Dunphy: We were married December 28, 1940

Q: A Christmas marriage.

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, believe it or not, in England the sun was shining. It was a glorious day, nobody wore a coat. It is usually damp and drizzly at that time of year, but it was a lovely day (chuckle). We had (chuckle)---

everybody shared coupons and everything for the wedding, for the food and the clothes. It was just terrific.

Q: And then you had children over there?

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, Philip was born the year after we married, and Susan five years later.

Q: So, how old were they when you came?

Mrs. Dunphy: Philip was ten and Susan was five.

Q: And you came where?

Mrs. Dunphy: We came to Long Island because that is where my sister-in-law and brother-in-law lived. They sponsored us you see, and happened to have a house that we could have.

Q: What did Norman find to do?

Mrs. Dunphy: Oh, he did kind of odd jobs. He didn't really find anything because, not being an American citizen, you know, he could have gotten something had he been. He thought he might do work for the Cuinard, cause he had done some work for the Cuinard. Some security work, and also he did ---he was estimate clerk for a while for the furnishing department. But, unfortunately, he became ill, so he couldn't do anything.



Q: I see, I see. In Long Island?

Mrs. Dunphy: In Long Island. I went back to Nassau Hospital. I went and got a job in Nassau Hospital. I did night duty because of the children. I could be there during the day, part of the day, to see to them before they went off to school, and see them in bed at night.

Q: Tell me, how did you first come to the Cape?

Mrs. Dunphy: Well, we came to the Cape,--- we came over in '52, and in '53 --- Susan, she was five, would be six then---she got friendly with a little girl in her class who lived at the back of us in Long Island. They invited us to the Cape in 53. We liked it so much that we came up again the next year with them and shared a cottage. Smith's Heights in Eastham.

Q: Oh, Sadie Flint's place.

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, Sadie Flint's place. That was in '53, then '54. Then '55, this friend was in business, Cape Cod Photos, the Coopers.

Q: Oh, sure.

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, we came up with them. They decided that they would like to move up here to the Cape so they

came up looking for places to open up. They found where they are now, but, of course it was vastly different. It was just a little hole-in-the-wall place and it was a radio shop. He saw that it had potential, he could dig a cellar and have that for a dark room and all kinds of things like that. We came up in the winter to look for a place to live and also I came up to find a job. I knew I had to work, so I put an ad in the local paper, The Cape Codder, before I came up. I said we were going to stay at The Governor Prence, that was the only place where you could stay at the time. So, I had some responses. I had someone call, they had an apartment and the lady told me they were going to look for a school nurse. They needed a school nurse. That Mrs. Putnam was pregnant and she'd have to leave. Well, she wanted to leave. So I went to see one of the committee, Mrs. Collins. You wouldn't know her she's long since died.

Q: Was she Bernie Collins' relative?

Mrs. Dunphy: No---in a way she was Bernie Collins' relative. She lived in the second last, to last house by the rotary before you come round into Orleans, on the right there. She married again, I've forgotten what her second name was. Her first husband was Lou Collins. She was a Home Ec. teacher at the High School, she was also on the Eastham School Board. So, I was sent there and

introduced to her and she said,---she asked about my qualifications and everything. And I said, "Oh you know, I like this kind of work, I'd like this kind of work." And so she said, "Are you interested in doing public health, you know, town work." I said, "Oh yes, I'm very interested in that, more so than the school work." So, she said, "If you get this job, you hang on to it, because next year at town meeting we're going to vote in a town nurse. We hope to. They're getting signatures." Then I went for an interview with the Superintendent of Schools. At the time I wasn't a citizen, but I was in the process of getting one. You see, working for a government department you have to be a citizen. So, I said, "We're in the process of taking our citizenship." Then, at the time you had to apply and then there was a waiting period. Now you don't, I don't think. So I had an interview with Mr. Pierce. I was accepted as school nurse. We came up Good Friday in a blizzard in 1956. Snow piled high, everywhere drifts. Anyway, we went to church Easter Sunday in a hail storm (chuckle) It was early anyway, the petition went around the following year, '57. The town nurse was voted in. So Betty Collins said, "You'll be alright." I said, "Won't it have to be advertised?" She said, "No we're not going to advertise it. We're satisfied with your work."

Q: You were the first?

Q: How was it?

Mrs. Dunphy: It was odd, because meeting Cape Codders, of course I had been used to handling all kinds of people. All kinds of walks of life, from title people in London to the poorest of poorest in Liverpool where I did my mid-wifery---a real slum area. I'd been used to meeting all types, Eastham had eleven hundred residents. There was one real estate, a post office combined with the general store, and there were two churches, Methodist and Universal. There were two restaurants, The Town Center and Bill's Place, and it was a dry town. It was mostly cottage and tourists. There were no buses, no National Park. The Elementary School was one through sixth grade.

Q: This was where the Old Schoolhouse Museum is?

Mrs. Dunphy: No, further down the road.

Q: Oh.

Mrs. Dunphy: I don't go that far back. (LOUD LAUGHTER)

Q: That's right, in the '50's.

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, Harvey Moore, he was a patient of mine, told me about the three schools that used to be in the Town of Eastham. How they used to have horse and cart

transportation, and about the railway stopping at Samoset Road. He was a fascinating individual. He used to tell me all kinds of stories. I don't know if they were true or not, but he could see I was interested and fascinated with these stories, so he used to---

Q: Can you remember any of his stories?

Mrs. Dunphy: I can't, I remember his story about Dr. Richardson, who was Elliot Richardson's--I don't know whether he was his father or grandfather---how he used to have to go and meet him. He came down on the train. Used to meet him with a horse and cart and take him up to his place. I think he I don't know if he built his house or not. He used to patrol the beaches. I don't know whether he was in the Coast Guard or whether he was given this job of patrolling the beaches.

Q: I think he was Sheriff.

Mrs. Dunphy: Was he Sheriff?

Q: Constable.

Mrs. Dunphy: Constable. I'm sorry, I can't recall any specific thing, but I remember him talking about Dr. Richardson, and how good he was to one of his family that had a handicap problem. He took him up to Boston and operated on him, I think. He was a surgeon.

Q: He evidently built Henry Beston's house. The Outermost House.

Mrs. Dunphy: Oh, he did?

Q: Yes.

Mrs. Dunphy: He probably told me about that then.

Q: He was quite a character.

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, he was. I just loved him. To go there, it was not like a nursing call, it was just like a social visit. He was entertaining.

Q: Now you had to set up this job as Town Nurse, because there had been nobody previously?

Mrs. Dunphy: There'd been nothing, no equipment.

Q: How did you go about doing this?

Mrs. Dunphy: Well, (CHUCKLE) I got my first big nursing bag. I went to the dump and someone had thrown it out. It was in fairly good condition, so I sterilized it, you know, disinfected it and cleaned it. It looked pretty good. Because there was no budget, you know. Nothing. I gradually got things given to me to fill up the bag. Then they said I could charge things at the pharmacy, at the time, for any

equipment I needed. Gradually each year they would add something to the budget for expenses and equipment. Then the Salvation Army, I was able to use some of their funds for different things, like a commode, and bedpans, and walkers, and things like that. I used the money from the Salvation Army because I happened to---the first year I was here, they asked me if I'd be the welfare worker. In so much that you were around town and you knew the needs of the people. It was only when I moved down here to Orleans that I had to stop representing the Town of Eastham for the Salvation Army.

Q: Really, well you said you were a Welfare worker too, was this for the Town of Eastham?

Mrs. Dunphy: No, no just for the Salvation Army. In so much that my job, I got around, and knew the needs of Eastham. At the time they weren't so great as they are now. It was mostly in the winter, things are tough for the fishermen and those kinds of people.

Q: Did you have an office in the Town Hall?

Mrs. Dunphy: No, I never had an office in the Town Hall. I used the school, the clinic, the nurses office. I did until I left

Q: So, the nurse really has no office?

Mrs. Dunphy: No. She has one in the school now, but they've changed it over. The room I had, the clinic, is the teacher's room now, and the nurse has moved up to the teacher's room, which is very small. You see, we had a great dental clinic going in Eastham. A great dental clinic. Bernie Collins, Sr.---that's the father of the other Collins,---he was very anxious to have a dental clinic going.

Q: For the children, was this?

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, for the children in the school, just for the children in school, and we used to do them. Dr. Dixon was the dentist. So, we had that. After I left they stopped it. They've sold all the dental stuff that was there.

Q: Were there any doctors in the town? Did you work with any doctors?

Mrs. Dunphy: There was Dr. Whitwright, he was an osteopath and he would do general practition too. And then you had to go to Orleans. There was Dr. Kelly and, I think Dr. Burke was here at the time, and that was it.

Q: In Eastham?

Mrs. Dunphy: No, he was in Orleans.

Q: But there was actually no---

Mrs. Dunphy: No, we had no physician.



Q: No physician?

Mrs. Dunphy: No physician, Dr. Whitwright, we had as the school doctor.

Q: But he was from Orleans.

Mrs. Dunphy: No, he was from Eastham.

Q: Oh, he was.

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, he was, Wonderstrand Farm.

Q: Oh, oh.

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, that was their place.

Q: Oh, it was. What did Eastham look like when you first came here in the fifties?

Mrs. Dunphy: Oh, it was very much country. Very much like I'd been used to. You see, there was no --- no part on that Hillside Restaurant. It was kind of a hill went up and then over on the right there was a mound, and there was a house on it. She was the dietician at the school. Dorothy Prentice. So, there was no side road up, just the one main road going, and, of course, there was no rotary. You went straight down there and right on the corner there was a large house, called, the Hepzibah House. It was run by a lady who would take care---

she took in people who needed a little care. Someone that wouldn't live alone and she had about four people living in there. I had occasion---had to go in and do some kind of nursing care for them.

Q: How did your office work? Did people call in and ask for you?

Mrs. Dunphy: They called in, there was a telephone number. I had the telephone number in my house. One ring would be the office. Two rings would be my home. So, that's how I got calls. It was put in the paper. Publicized.

Q: Did you have a lot of people right off the bat?

Mrs. Dunphy: No, not really, not really, no, it was slow in the beginning. I know one patient, her house, I don't think it's there anymore it was up somewhere near the Richardson house, it was a cottage---the Eastham Welfare worker, Dorice Mayo, asked would I go up and show her about, or give her a shot, I can't remember, give her the insulin and see that she had everything she needed for it. So, I went to this house, the grass was knee deep, growing up to the door. So, I knocked, and knocked, and knocked, nobody answered. Eventually, she came. Mrs. Knowles. She came to the door and said, "We open up this door for funerals and

weddings only." (LAUGHTER) So, I said, "I didn't know you had a back door." So, I had to go around and find the back door. I wondered at all the grass being so high. I thought the lady mustn't be here. So, I went (LAUGHTER) around to the back door and I had to look to see what she had. She had an old-fashioned icebox, which she was out of ice. She had her insulin in there. I called the Welfare worker and I said, "Something has got to be done there, she's got her insulin in an icebox with no ice in it, she's got her insulin in there." I kind of talked to her about her diet and her insulin, and that kind of thing.

Q: What kind of people did you have mostly? Elderly?

Mrs. Dunphy: Mostly elderly, but, you see, being the Town and School nurse, I had the families right from the new baby to the grandmothers. I used to do all the new baby visits. That was a big help, you got into the homes, saw the families, and you knew the rest of the families, and you knew the children in school, their homes and their parents.

Q: Did you do any mid-wifery?

Mrs. Dunphy: I did,---did I do one or two in the town of Eastham. She left at the last minute, and I rushed with them to the hospital.

Q: Cape Cod Hospital?

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, of course, I could deliver if anything happened on the way. One, I just got in and got the head and the doctor came. But, I think it was about her sixth child, so, it was easy. She had wanted me to do the whole delivery. I said, "No, I can't because they don't acknowledge midwives here."

Q: This was mostly just general nursing.

Mrs. Dunphy: General nursing care and you tried to do some education. I used to have the clinics, the vaccination---not vaccination---when they came, the polio. That's right, the first year I was there it was the polio. The first polio, of course, everybody turned out, and I didn't know a soul, and trying to cope with helping the doctor, filling up the syringes, coping with the shots, seeking records. I needed somebody to write records. One of the women volunteered. She said, "Would you like some help." I said, "Yes, I would, if you could just take the names down." That was the first in 1956. The first polio clinic we had. I think everybody showed up for that.

Q: Is this all Welfare work?

Mrs. Dunphy: This was all, there was no charge on that

because it was an initial thing. I don't know whether the town picked up the tab or whether the county did.

Q: I mean your other nursing too.

Mrs. Dunphy: Oh, no, there was a fee, \$1.25 a visit.

Q: But, you were on a regular salary.

Mrs. Dunphy: I was on a salary. When I started at the school it was \$800.00 a year.

Q: Full-time?

Mrs. Dunphy: No, no, no, that was part-time. But, I had to supplement that, so I went down and did some private nursing at night. Then the next year I got a raise, they doubled it to \$1,600.00. And the next year they doubled that to \$3,200.00. After that I kept getting a raise, I ended up at \$10,000.00.

Q: For full-time?

Mrs. Dunphy: When I retired, I think I was getting \$10,000.

Q: Who were some of the people you worked with?

Mrs. Dunphy: Well, of course, the teachers in the school. You know, two of them are retiring, they've got a reception next week one day. Mr. Nickerson was the head

principal.

Q: Was that the present high school?

Mrs. Dunphy: No, no the Elementary. I just did the Elementary. We had, but then we just had the high school, Orleans High School. That's all, we didn't have a Middle School at the time. They stayed with us until the sixth grade, and then during Mr. Nickerson's time we got a kindergarten, and a library, and a librarian, of course.

Q: Can you remember any stories about Otto Nickerson?

Mrs. Dunphy: Otto Nickerson, I used to go to him, and used to say, "I'm very concerned about this child, Otto, there's something wrong with him, his weight is very poor, he is not gaining at all, I'm just concerned about him." He said, "His father and grandfather were like that, always skinny kids. Don't worry about him."

(LAUGHTER) I said, "I'd like to know---later on the lunches were introduced---I'd like to see what he really eats at lunchtime. I'll come down." And you know he was a picky eater. He used to tell me things like that. He was a disciplinarian. He really used some physical force sometimes, he was really a disciplinarian.

Q: Did he have any parents coming and saying, "Please don't touch my little baby."

Mrs. Dunphy: No, no, no, he was so well respected, and they took his command. I think we should have more like him. (LAUGHTER) He was very humorous at times. He was a great help to me, because, I could go to him wondering about families. I wanted a little of the background before I went to do a home visit if I was concerned about a child.

Q: Is there a great deal of difference between the British training and American?

Mrs. Dunphy: Oh, yes.

Q: You found that out while you were working here?

Mrs. Dunphy: Oh yes, yes, yes.

Q: What, for instance?

Mrs. Dunphy: Well, I think we got more practical experience. I did four years general nursing, I specialized in the other things, contagious diseases, which took two and a half years in that specialty. All the time you're not only gaining theory, but your gaining actual experience. I know, I've met someone that didn't even know what certain things and procedures were. Oh, yes it's a lot different here. I wouldn't know that it was better, I wouldn't want to say that, but you know, it was different.

Q: What Selectmen did you work with?

Mrs. Dunphy: Luther Smith, Bernard Collins, and Maurice Moore were the three selectmen when I came.

Q: Can you give me little thumbnail descriptions?

Mrs. Dunphy: Well, I went for an interview when the Town job came available. I went and I had my credentials with me. They interviewed, talked to me. I said, "Would you like to see my credentials?" "Nope," They didn't want to see anything. They saw me. (LAUGHTER)

Q: This was the three of them?

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, so, I thought I worked all these years for this and nobody wants to look at it.

(LAUGHTER)

Q: What was Maurice Moore like as a selectman?

Mrs. Dunphy: He was great. I thought he was great. He was another one that---the three of them loved the Cape and loved the Town of Eastham, they really did. Maurice, he'd go---holes in the road, he'd go and fix it himself, that kind of thing.

Q: The first we saw of him was at Town Meeting. He had



argue about some \$68.33 on something.

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, that was, what was his name?

Q: Maurice Wiley.

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, that was Maurice Wiley, yes.

Q: Oh.

Mrs. Dunphy: No, no, Katherine Moore's husband.

Q: Maurice---?

Mrs. Dunphy: Maurice, must've been---what was his name?

Q: Maurice Wiley.

Mrs. Dunphy: Maurice Wiley, I mean was selectman, that's it.

Q: Not Maurice Moore.

Mrs. Dunphy: Not Maurice Moore, that's it, I used to get them mixed up.

Q: Okay

Mrs. Dunphy: You know, they're both grey haired and they have the same kind of features. That's right Maurice Wiley was selectman, that's right, he was. Because when you said when you came, that made me think, because I don't

think Maurice Wiley was around then.

Q: He had an excellent reputation evidently.

Mrs. Dunphy: Oh, yes.

Q: He was a very good selectman.

Mrs. Dunphy: Very good. As I say, they loved the Town of Eastham. They were very concerned with it, all three of them.

Q: You've got some notes there, May, do you want to go on with them? I have other questions here, but let's talk about those.

Mrs. Dunphy: Well, I was talking about Harvey Moore, telling about the school's and the railway stop at Samoset Road, ship wrecks, and farming, just that I enjoyed his visits and encouraged conversations. I'm only sorry I don't recall or remember more. And then about Mrs. Doane, I've told you those things. I attended meetings regularly for the town and doing my nursing too. The largest issue that divided the people of the town was the Park.

Q: I bet.

Mrs. Dunphy: It was Maurice Moore, now he was against it, very much against it. I think the others agreed it would be a good thing. I'm glad they did it.

Q: We've got a few stories on that. A lot of people were terribly against, it because they thought that their land was going to be taken away. I think they were frightened.

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, they were frightened, but, you see, they could live there, people could live there and they could keep on with family.

Q: It's kept it from becoming "honky tonk".

Mrs. Dunphy: I get so disturbed when I see bulldozers and trees and everything going down. Can you imagine all the little buildings we would have down that end? It would be a mess.

Q: Hot dog stands.

Mrs. Dunphy: I mean let's face it, this is the Cape. This is "Vacationland".

Q: Do you remember when Route 6 went through, or was it there when you came?

Mrs. Dunphy: No, no, no, it wasn't through when we came---Yes, you could get to Provincetown on the main road. We didn't have to go around those back roads then, did we? The only thing that was different on the road was the rotary. There was no rotary. At the end of it

there used to be a dinette. It was about the only place you could eat in Orleans, unless you went to a big restaurant. They had nice food.

Q: The Reno Diner. It's where the---where it is now--  
-that hotel?

Q: Holiday---

Mrs. Dunphy: Holiday Inn, yes, I think that's about where it was.

Q: Besides your nursing job, did you belong to any organizations? Church or anything like that?

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, we joined the church right away when we came.

Q: Which church?

Mrs. Dunphy: Episcopal.

Q: Episcopal, oh, yes, The Holy Spirit.

Mrs. Dunphy: And then we belonged to the Eastern Star. We haven't been in years. I can't go out too much at night. I go out when I can, if it is something important.

Q: Actually, your children were, when you came, how old? Were they in high school?

Mrs. Dunphy: Philip would be fourteen, wouldn't he?  
And Susan would be nine. She was in Eastham  
Elementary, and Philip was in the high school, Orleans  
High School.

Q: Did you work in PTA? or Girl Scouts?

Mrs. Dunphy: No, we didn't have PTA.

Q: You didn't.

Mrs. Dunphy: No, we didn't have PTA.

Q: Or Girl Scouts, or anything like that?

Mrs. Dunphy: No, not really, I did some volunteer work  
when they wanted a health talk or something like that.

Q: Oh, I see.

Mrs. Dunphy: But, I didn't do any---

Q: Well, you probably had your hands full with the job  
and a family.

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, I know it was, but it was very rewarding.

Q: Can you remember any notable Town Meetings, where  
there were fights over your budget or anything like that?

Mrs. Dunphy: No, there was never any fights over my budget.

Q: It just went through?

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, I never asked for anything, you know, other than I needed for my work and I never asked for a raise. Not once.

Q: Do you remember any town meetings where there was dissension or anything that came up that would be interesting for history?

Mrs. Dunphy: There was one dissension over my request for a town car. I didn't have a town car. I was using the family car and getting mileage. Things were beginning to get a little larger then in the town and I was carrying more equipment. Susan used to say, "Do we have to sit on bedpans in the back of the car when we get in?" (LAUGHTER) I said, "Well, I'm not moving stuff in and out, in and out, every time I have to drive them somewhere." I thought I should have a town car, the other town's have a nurse's car. So, I asked for one, I asked for a VW at first. I got a little bug. Well, I thought I won't ask for too much, and then I got---then it got too large---I needed more equipment to carry and also it was kind of difficult for patients to get in and out of, if I had to transport them somewhere. So, then I asked to turn it in and then there was a little thing about that. But I got a Volkswagon Squareback, which---

that was the only two cars I had, so when I left it was due to be turned in. I turned it in for the new nurse and I bought the old one, I was so used to it.

(LAUGHTER)

Q: When did you leave, May?

Mrs. Dunphy: When did I leave? When did I retire? Was it 1976? Was it all that long ago?

Q: Nine years ago.

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, '76, I think I retired.

Q: Well, then you were town nurse for thirty years.

Mrs. Dunphy: No, twenty.

Q: Who replaced you?

Mrs. Dunphy: Jean Stage.

Q: Jean Sage?

Mrs. Dunphy: Stage, S-T-A-G-E. She stayed five years, and now she's with the Orleans Council on Aging. She's the director of the Orleans Council on Aging. And, now, of course, they don't have a separate Town Nurse in Eastham. They are with the Wellfleet/Truro group. The three towns. The office is down in Wellfleet.

Q: I see, so they just have one nurse for the three towns.

Mrs. Dunphy: No, they---I don't know how many they have on the staff, no, they have more.

Q: They have more than one?

Mrs. Dunphy: Oh, yes, I think they have sent a nurse out to each town at once. I know they have quite a few nurses there because they have to have---the biggest thing in the nursing area was the---1966 Medicare came in, and that was quite a thing.

Q: In what way?

Mrs. Dunphy: Well, it was more form filling, you know, anything to do with the Government. We had to go through lectures, and be oriented on it. Sometimes Boston, sometimes New Bedford. There were so many requirements for Medicare. They didn't at the time know whether they wanted to be bothered with it. And, I said, "Well, look, these people that are eligible, they get this service through Medicare, otherwise they would have to pay." It was voted in. They had it. They accepted Medicare.

Q: Can you remember any unusual cases you had---challenging, different?

Mrs. Dunphy: Some of the very sick patients that had to have oxygen, and aspiration, you know, these were, they



needed watching and I used to go back at night and sometimes I stayed overnight if I thought there was a concern.

Q: You didn't put them in a hospital?

Mrs. Dunphy: No, the wife didn't want the man, as it happened to go. She wanted to keep him home. She did very well really with him. But, then I'd get home, and I'd be concerned and go back and check, stay a few hours with them. And I know a child one time, she was pre-school, she was having difficulty with breathing, I set up a tent for her, you know, an inhalation tent for her over her crib. That I stayed. Sometimes you just felt you should go back and check and see how things were. On the whole it was a very nice experience, a very nice life.

Q: I imagine it was.

Mrs. Dunphy: Busy, but it was very rewarding.

Q: Do you have anything else on your notes that you want to get out?

Mrs. Dunphy: No, I think I messed around with it a bit.

Q: You must have remained active in some way after you retired, in some ways, because you recruited us---

Mrs. Dunphy: (LAUGHTER) Yes, oh yes, I introduced the Council on Aging to the Town of Eastham. I had seen it

in a nursing magazine about---in North Adams, where they had this kind of a program for the seniors. And I thought, "Boy, we could do that in the Town of Eastham, so many retired people." So I wrote to the State Department and got the information, and they sent down a speaker. And he came down. The Town Hall was full, we had a good turnout. We got it started. It was started with the Senior Citizens Club first, which apparently a lot of people said it was a mistake, should have started with a Board, you know, a Council on Aging. He said, "Start with a club first and then get people interested and they'll serve on the Board." That was the kind of thing I did. I started it before I retired. I initiated it. Then we worked on things after that.

Q: As a volunteer?

Mrs. Dunphy: As a volunteer, yes, there were no paid jobs in those days, no paid jobs at all. We all pitched in and did the clerical work and what have you. Then I started the Blood Pressure Clinics. That was another thing I was able to incorporate with it. Adult inoculations, the flus and different things.

Q: And you started these, May?

Mrs. Dunphy: I started this, yes.

Q: In <sup>A</sup>the way you were the founder of the Council on Aging in Eastham.

Mrs. Dunphy: That's right, yes, some people are under the impression it was---what was the name of the man that died. He was a very good worker,---he did---when it got bigger, he was---he went up and got the tax-free, whatever you call it. He went up to the State Department, worked on that, and got a tax-free number for the Council. And he worked on that and he was marvelous, he did an awful lot of good work.

Q: You can't remember his name?

Mrs. Dunphy: The minute you go through the door I'll remember it. (LAUGHTER)

Q: You can always add it.

Q: Not Don Dotkin?

Mrs. Dunphy: No, Don Dorkin was one of the first chairmen of the Board---he had a brother that used to live---kind of his sight was bad and he used to walk with a cane. He was a square dancing instructor too. Gee, isn't that awful, I can't remember his name?

Q: Well, you can always add it to the transcript. It's probably, undoubtedly, in the Town Records, I can get it

Q: Gus Franz?

Mrs. Dunphy: Gus Franz, Gus Franz was his name.

Q: Oh good.

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, you've probably heard that name.

Q: When did they start having a paid director? Was Sandy Szedlak the first one?

Mrs. Dunphy: It was before I left, before I left. I can't remember the year, I really can't remember the year, so, I wouldn't have a note of that. But, I was Secretary for a while on the Council, on the Board.

Q: On the Board? Who was the first president? Gus Franz?

Mrs. Dunphy: No, Don Dotkin.

Q: Don Dotkin of the Board of Council on Aging?

Mrs. Dunphy: Don Dotkin was the first.

Q: Were you instrumental in setting the board up?

Mrs. Dunphy: No, not really, I think it was a joint effort. It had to be appointed by the Selectmen anyway

Q: And then it had to be voted on at Town Meeting for funds?

Mrs. Dunphy: We didn't have any funds. (LAUGHTER)

Q: Was it completely volunteer?

Mrs. Dunphy: All volunteer work. All volunteer. Nobody got a cent. Then I think we started because of expenses, mailings and various things. We met in the Town Hall.

Q: But, now they have two people that are salaried.

Mrs. Dunphy: They have a director, they have an Outreach person, they have---I've forgotten her name--- she's the secretary, and I think they're taking on someone else.

Q: To run the nutrition?

Mrs. Dunphy: That's right, oh, yes, Don Duncan and I went and saw about that.

Q: Oh?

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, I said, "Before I leave this I want to see where they come and eat." To make it---these people never get out, but if they could come and eat together, it would be, they would look forward to it. A little social thing, as well as having a meal. As the Meals On Wheels.

Q: So, you started that too?

Mrs. Dunphy: No, I didn't, not on my own. Don Dotkin and I were on that committee for the Meals On Wheels. We went to meetings and got to know all about it and how it worked.

Q: This must have been what, about eight years ago?

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, it could be about that.

Q: We've been here five years and you got us right off the bat. (LAUGHTER) We just quit last spring.

Mrs. Dunphy: Oh, did you? Well, you've done well.

Q: Well, we've done it for five years.

Mrs. Dunphy: Boy, that's good.

Q: That's a long time.

Mrs. Dunphy: It sure is.

Q: We might go back, you never know. We're getting off the track here, do you have anything else that you can think of?

Q: There was one thing that I was going to ask, "Did you have an ambulance service when you first came?"

Mrs. Dunphy: Well, we had the three town ambulance. We

had one fire chief and one helper he had. And there was one police chief and he eventually got a helper. Which was Winnie Knowles. The ambulance, we used the three town ambulance. I used to have to ride it when there was a female involved. I used to have to ride it. I remember, I've been to Boston. I've been all over New Bedford, Providence. I've been all over riding the ambulance. One time I had to take someone---they lived on Great Pond Road, she was a single lady, she lived with her father. He had a beautiful garden there on Great Pond Road. She had a tumor of the brain and she was being sent to Boston, and of course, I had to go along with her. She was lying in the back of the ambulance, she said, : " Do you know any poems?" I said, "I'm not very good at that kind of thing." "I don't really know any poems that I could recite to you." So, she said, " Do you know anything that you could talk to me?" I said, "Well, I know some prayers, if your interested? She said, "We weren't brought up with any faith and now I think maybe I'm missing something." She knew this was the end. She said, "My father never believed in that kind of thing, just nature, flowers and animals." I said, "That's good." So I recited the twenty-third psalm for her. She said, "Tell me more about it." So, I talked to her abuot things. I hope I helped her. I don't know, she didn't live very long. She was a very

before, before she got so ill. He must have had a lot of caring, because his garden was just beautiful. Someone like that must have something in them. To care for a garden like he used to.

Q: Tell me, I ask other people this and you get some surprising answers. If you had your life to live over again, would you change anything?

Mrs. Dunphy: Nope. Maybe I'd have done things a bit differently, 'cause I've made a lot of mistakes.

Q: Everybody does.

Mrs. Dunphy: But, I guess with mistakes you learn. Hopefully you don't do it again.

Q: That's right.

Mrs. Dunphy: But, some things I never learn (LAUGHTER) --  
--No I don't think so, I've enjoyed being married, and enjoyed being a mother, and I've enjoyed my nursing. I'm still involved in volunteer work at the Work Shop. I volunteer there.

Q: This is with the retarded people?

Mrs. Dunphy: Yes, they used to be down here, until they got the building in Eastham. It used to be nice then, we had the gift shop in front, which I worked at. The



children---children, I still call them children, some of them were over forty. I used to go in there and help them. Check the candles they were counting and put them in boxes, when the gift shop was slow. I'm still a volunteer at the shop.

Q: Do you have a philosophy of life?

Mrs. Dunphy: Just do unto others as you would have them do to you.

Q: Okay May, thank you very, very much.